

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6083

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 10: CHRISTIANS CONFIDENT OF
POSITION; BOTH LEBANESE SIDES EXPECT LITTLE FROM ARAB LEAGUE MEETING

REF: BEIRUT 6043

1. SUMMARY: TELL ZAATAR FIGHTING INTENSIFIES IN CONTEXT OF BASIC
CHRISTIAN SEIGE STRATEGY. BEIRUT AREA FIGHTING SOMEWHAT DIMINSHED.
THREE FRENCH EMBASSY MILITARY PERSONNEL KIDNAPPED. CHRISTIAN
OFFENSIVE IN NORTH STAGNATES. SYRIAN PRESSURE CONTINUES THROUGHOUT
COUNTRY, NOTABLY WITH BOMBARDMENT SETTING FIRE TO ZAHRANI OIL
REFINERY AND STORAGE TANKS. LEBANESE FACTIONS PLACE LITTEL STOCK IN
ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING JULY 12. JALLOUD REPORTED
ABOUT TO ABANDON EFFORTS TO WIN SYRIAN CONCESSIONS. CHRISTIANS
CONFIDENT AS THEY PLAN SEND LARGE DELEGATION TO DAMASCUS, NOW ON
JULY 11. PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS PESSIMISTIC, APPEALING FOR HELP
AND SAYING THEY MUST FIGHT ON. EDDE BLAMES FATAH FOR WEST BEIRUT
LAWLESSNESS. END SUJMARY.

2. NEW LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN BEIRUT AREA INCLUDES APPARENT RIGHTIST
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TANK ASSAULT ON TELL ZAATAR WHERE PALESTINIAN POSITIONS SAID LOST

AND RETAKEN SEVERAL TIMES. CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE IN SIEGE STRATEGY APPEARS UNDIMINISHED. CHRSTIANS CONTINUE INTENSIVE BOMBARDMENT OF SHIITE ENCLAVE OF NABAA. BEIRUT CENTER VERY ACTIVE IN PAST 24 HOUR INCLUDING FIRES AND BOMBARDMENTS OF FLUCTUATING INTENSITY, BUT BOMBARDMENTS OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS SOMEWHAT DIMINSHED. FIGHTING CONTINUES ALONG ENTIRE BEIRUT RIVER LINE. THREE FRENCH OFFICERS, PART OF FRENCH EMBASSY SECURITY FORCE, KIDNAPPED IN HAMRA AREA OF WEST BEIRUT JULY 9. CAPTORS UNKNOWN, BUT HOSTAGES RUMORED ALIVE SEVERAL HOURS AFTER KIDNAPPING. RECIPROCAL BOMBARDMENTS AND LIMITED GROUND ACTION REPORTED FROM CHIAH/AIN EL REMMANEH, WHERE LEFTIST CLAIM ADVANCES, AND HADETH/LEYLAKI AS WELL AS IN THE MOUNTAINS AT ALEY/KAHALEE, IN THE NORTH METN AND AT OUYOUNE EL SIMANE/FARAY.

3. IN THE NORTH VIOLENCE LEVEL HAS DIMINSHED FOLLOWING CHRSTIAN SUCCESSES IN KOURA. THRE CAZAS OF BECHARE, ZGHORTA AND BATROUN NOW SAID COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL OF RIGHTIST LEBANES FRONT. PALESTINIAN/LEFTISTS SAY THEY HAVE REPULSED ATTACK ON VILLAGE OF FIAA AND CHRISTIAN FORCES CLAIM TO HAVE RESISTED ATTACK ON ABA. ENFE REMAINS UNDER SEIGE BY CHRISTIANS. MUTUAL BOMBARDMENTS CONTINUE BETWEEN TRIPOLI/ ZGHORTA AND IN SURROUNDING AREAS, BUT CHRISTIAN GROUND ADVANCE IS HALTED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY..

4. DESPITE WITHDRAWAL PROMISES MADE TO LIBYAN PREMIER JALLOUD, SYRIAN FORCES REMAIN AT SIDON, ROUEISSAT/SOFAR, IN THE BEKAA AND THE AKKAR AND VARIOUS PARTS OF MOUNT LEBANON. HEAVY SYRIAN BOMBARDMENT OF SIDON, ZAHRANI REFINERY AND PALESTINIAN CAMPS OF AIN EL HELWEH AND MIEH MIEH BEGAN 2000 HOURS, JULY 9. ZAHRANI TANK FARM HIT IN SEVERAL PLACES AND LARGE FIRES NOW BURNING OUT OF CONTROL. DELIBERATE SHELLING OF REFINERY SEEN HERE AS CONFIRMING SYRIAN INTENT BLOCK FUEL SUPPLY TO LEFTIST SIDE, INCLUDING WEST BEIRUT, IN VIEW OF COMPLETE CONTROL DISTRIBUTION OF ZAHRANI REFINERY PRODUCTS BY FATAH AND LEBNAESE ARAB ARMY. SYRIAN GRIP ON AREAS SOUTH OF BEIRUT DEFINITELY TIGHTENING. Wafa CLAIMS JULY 9 SIGHTING OF SYRIAN COASTAL PATROL OFF SOUTH BEIRUT BEACH OF RAMLET EL-BAIDA. IN THE BEKAA, SYRIAN BLOCKADE OF BAALBEK AND HERMEL CONTINUES AND WE UNDERSTAND SYIANS MAY BE PREPARING TO TAKE BAALBEK.

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5. ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING N CAIRO SCHEDULED FOR JULY 12 PESSIMISTICALLY VIEWED BY MOST PARTIES TO LEBANESE CONFLICT AND MAY BE POSTPONED. IF IT DOES MEET, PRESS EXPECTS CALL FOR ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE. PRESS REPORTS THAT AL DEPUTY KHOLI HAS INVITED CAMILLE CHAMOUN TO REPRESENT LEBANON AS FOREIGN MINISTER AT MEETING. PRESS CONJECTURES THAT RIGHTIST DEMAND TO SEE REPORT OF AL TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO ATTEND CONFERENCE IS REALLY DESIRE TO KNOW IN ADVANCE

WHO WILL BE BLAMED FOR CEASEFIRE FAILURE. NEGATIVE INDICATION IS STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBER, TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HABIB CHATTI, THAT RIGHTIST SEEK A MILITARY SOLUTION, WANT PARTITION AND ARE WORKING FOR DEPARTURE OF PALESTINIANS, DEAD OR ALIVE. LEFTIST SOURCES REPORTED IN PRESS AS BELIEVING THAT LIBYAN PREMIER JALLOUD WILL ABANDON HIS MEDIATION EFFORTS WITHIN NEXT TWO DAYS IF HE DOES NOT OBTAIN SYRIAN CONCESSIONS. ONE REPORT INDICATES HE MAY TRAVEL LATER TO MOSCOW, MEETING ARAFAT THERE.

6. CHRISITANS DEFINITELY FEELING THEIR OATS FOLLOWING MILITARY SUCCESSES IN BOTH BEIRUT AREA AND NORTH LEBANON. TONY FRANGIE ISSUES STATEMENT THAT, "AFTER HAVING LIBERATED THE REGION OF KOURA, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF LIBERATING ALL OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY CONTROLLED BY FOREIGNERS, CONSPIRATORS AND TRAITORS." PIERRE GEMAYEL VISITED CHEKKA, TELL ZAATAR AND JISR EL BASHA JULY 9, CONCLUDING HIS REVIEW OF RIGHTIST VICTORY SITES WITH STATEMENT THA "LEBANESE SITUATION REQUIRES MORE THAN MOERE MEETINGS AND STERILE WORDS AFTER 15 MONTHS OF CWVIL WAR," OBVIOUS CONDEMNATION OF ARAB LEAGUE EFFORTS ANDPRAISE FOR SYRIAN INITIATIVE. VOICE OF LEBANON (KATAEL) CLAIMED JULY 9 THAT VISIT TO MOSCOW OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM RESULTED IN GREE LIGHT FOR SYRIAN INITIATIVE IN LEBANON. VOICE OF LEBANON CLAIMS TO KNOW THAT SYRIAN INIATIVE NOW HAS BLESSING OF USA AS WELL AS OF USSR. KFOUR FRONT DELEGATION TO VISIT DAMASCUS, NOW ON JULY 11. PRESS REPORTS ASSASD INVITATION DELIVERED BYLAL DEPUTY KHOLI. ANNOUNCEMENT SAID GROUP TO BE COMPOSED OF EDOUARD HOONEIN, LUCIEN DAHDAH, BECHIR GEMAYEL, KARIM PAKRADOUNI, DANY CHAMOUN AND JOSEPH MOGHABGHAB -- A MISTURE OF PHALANGISTS AND CHAMOUNSISTS, POLITICIANS AND MILITARY LEADERS, SUGGESTING DESIRE FOR GREATER CHRISTIAN-SYRIAN COOPERATION ON SEVERAL LEVELS.

7. PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS APPEAR NO MORE HOPEFUL THAN CHRISTIANS OF POSSIBILITY AL SUCCESS. RADIO LEBANON (LEBANESE ARAB ARMY) CONFIDENTIAL

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SYAS "THE MANEUVERS OF THE SYRIAN/KFOUR FRONT ALLIANCE HAVE CONVINCED THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND THE PALESTINE RESISTANCE THAT THE DECISIVE SOLUTION CAN ONLY BE MILITARY." YASIR ARAFAT SENDS SECOND MESSAGE IN TWO DAYS TO SADAT ASKING FOR INTERVENTION ON SIDE OF PALESTINIANS. DISGRUNTLED BY MILITARY REVERSES, SYRIAN INTITIATIVE AND PALESTINIAN PREDOMINANCE IN LEFTIST LEADERSHIP ROLES, KAMAL JUNBLATT APPEARS BENT ON REVERSION TO TRADITIONAL SPOILER ROLE. WE UNDERSTAND HE HAD DECIDING TO ESCALATE

MILITARILY AND IS BULDING AIRSTRIP IN THE CHOUF FOR SUPPLIES ENTRY, TO BE COMPLETED IN 24 DAYS. WE UNDERSTAND SOME LIBYAN ARMS CAME IN THROUGH SIDON DURING PAST WEEK. HOWEVER, JUNBLATT'S MILITARY PROWESS REMAINS SEVERELY LIMITED BY SHORTAGE OF SUPPLIES AND FIGHTERS, AS WELL AS BY DIVISIONS WITHIN DRUZE COMMUNITY.

8. RAYMOND EDDE TURNS FROM RECENT ATTACK ON DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICITY TO JULY 9 REPROACH OF FATAH FOR ITS FAILURE TO PROVIDE SECURITY IN WEST BEIRUT AND "PUT A BRAKE ON CRIMINALITY," AND ADVOCATES CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR AUTHO THEFT. EDDE SAID POPULAR MALCONTENT AMONG MOSLEM FAMILIES EVEN GREATER THAN AMONG CHRISTIAN FAMILIES IN WEST BEIRUT AND DEPARTURE RATE AMONG MOSLEMS INCREASING MORE THAN AMONG CHRISTIANS.

9. JULY 9 TESTING OF ELECCTRIC LINES BPUT LIGHTS ONIN WEST BEIRUT DISTRICTS FOR PERIODS RANGING FOR FEW MINUTES (INCLUDING U.S. EMBASSY NEIGHBORHOOD) TO SEVERAL HOURS AND WAS GREETED BY SALUTATORY SHOOTIN AIR. HOWEVER, AUTHORITES WORKING WITH VERY FEW RESOURCES AS ONLY ELECTRIC SUPPLY TO CITY NOW COMES FROM NAHR IBRAHIM, ALTHOUGH AUTHORITIES TRYING TO SUPPLEMENT THIS BY EXTENDING EXISTING SECONDARY COASTAL LINE FROM JAMHOUR TO DAMOUR ALL THE TO JIYYE THERMMAL COMPLEX AS MEANS OF SUPPLEMENTING SUPPLY. OPERATION OF JIYYE DEPENDS ON FUEL FROM ZAHRANI. RESOLUTION OF ELECTRICITY AND RELATED WATER CRISIS NOT EXPECTED SOON.
SEELYE

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